

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PRETOR 04542 081319Z
ACTION NODS-00

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AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

S E C R E T PRETORIA 4542

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

DEPARTMENT PASS TO SECRETARY VANCE FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: SMITH WILL URGE COLLEAGUES TO
ATTEND ALL PARTIES MEETING

1. SUMMARY: SMITH AGREED WITH GRAHAM AND ME THAT AN ALL PARTIES MEETING SHOULD BE TRIED. HE WILL TALK TO MUZOREWA, SITHOLE, AND CHIRAU NEXT TUESDAY RECOGNIZING THAT HE WILL MEET SOME RESISTANCE WHICH, HOWEVER, HE BELIEVES HE CAN OVERCOME. END SUMMARY.

2. GRAHAM AND I CALLED ON IAN SMITH LATE SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT HIS HOUSE. ONLY GAYLARD WAS ALSO PRESENT. GRAHAM LED OFF SAYING THAT IT HAD BEEN AGREED AT THE MEETING WITH SECRETARIES VANCE AND OWEN IN LONDON ON JULY 20 THAT WE WOULD PRESS AHEAD WITH AN ALL PARTIES MEETING WHICH THEY WOULD CHAIR, RESTRICTED TO PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTIES, PRIVATE FROM THE PRESS AND ONLY ANNOUNCED WHEN IT WAS HELD. WE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO HOLD IT SOON -- NEXT WEEKEND OR, SINCE THAT MIGHT BE RUSHING THINGS, THE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 PRETOR 04542 081319Z

FOLLOWING AT THE LUANGWA GAME LODGE IN ZAMBIA. THERE WOULD BE OCCASIONS FOR MEETINGS OF JUST THE SIX PRINCIPALS, AFRICANS ALONE AND OTHER GROUPS AS DESIRED. GRAHAM SAID THAT WHILE WE DID NOT SHARE THE APOCALYPTICAL VIEWS RECENTLY EXPRESSED IN THE PRESS ABOUT THE SITUATION IN RHODESIA, IT APPEARED TO BE CONTINUING TO DETERIORATE. WE THEREFORE BELIEVED IT IMPORTANT TO PROCEED PROMPTLY.

3. SMITH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT KILLINGS WERE CONTINUING AND THE ECONOMY WAS WORSENING. HE WOULD BE FOOLISH TO PASS UP ANY OPPORTUNITY TO END THIS SITUATION OR PROLONG IT A DAY LONGER THAN NECESSARY. HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT AS BAD AS SOME BELIEVED. THE RECENT RAID IN MOZAMBIQUE SHOWED THEIR CONTINUING MILITARY STRENGTH. A BREAKTHROUGH ON THE CEASEFIRE PROGRAM WAS POSSIBLE. THEIR CRACK TROOPS WERE ALL ON THE BORDER AND HAD NOT BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE INTERNAL SITUATION WHICH WAS BEING HANDLED ENTIRELY BY NON-PROFESSIONALS. HIS SECURITY FORCES HAD ASSURED HIM LAST WEEK THEY COULD HOLD OUT FOR A LONG TIME AND WOULD BE HERE WITH THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL NEXT YEAR AT THIS TIME IF NECESSARY.

4. NEVERTHELESS, HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE WORLD WAS BLAMING HIM AND HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR BEING THE INTRANSIGENT ONES. IT COULD NOT HURT TO GO TO A MEETING. HE FELT NKOMO NOW RECOGNIZED THAT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT COULD PROCEED WITHOUT HIM AND THAT IT WAS TIME TO NEGOTIATE FOR A RETURN. THEREFORE, SMITH SAID HE WAS WILLING TO TRY THE MEETING WE WERE PROPOSING. HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WOULD PROBABLY RESIST BUT THEY UNDERSTOOD EACH OTHER PRETTY WELL BY THIS TIME. HE HAD NEVER HAD TO BANG ON THE TABLE YET, THOUGH A LITTLE PRESSURE MIGHT BE NECESSARY THIS TIME. HE WOULD DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH THEM ON TUESDAY (AUGUST 8).

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 PRETOR 04542 081319Z

5. I SAID I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO THINK THAT NKOMO WOULD COME BACK ON THE BASIS OF THE MARCH 3RD AGREEMENT. SMITH ACKNOWLEDGED THIS POSSIBILITY. HE SAID SOME "FACE SAVING" WOULD BE NECESSARY WHICH HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WILL FIND DIFFICULT, BUT IT COULD BE DONE. HE WOULD INSIST ON A "REASONABLE ARRANGEMENT". HE HAS MADE TOO MANY PROMISES TO HIS FOLLOWERS TO ACCEPT LESS THAN THAT.

6. SMITH SAID THAT NEXT WEEKEND WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR HIM BUT HE WOULD HOPE THE ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE FOR A MEETING AS SOON AFTER THAT AS POSSIBLE. GAYLARD NOTED THAT NOW THAT WE WERE NO LONGER PROPOSING A SECRET MEETING IT WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY TO HOLD IT OVER A WEEKEND. SMITH ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT FOUR DAYS WOULD BE NECESSARY. WE DISCUSSED LUANGWA AND URGED SMITH TO TRY TO ENCOURAGE MUZOREWA, WHO WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO MIGHT OBJECT, TO ACCEPT IT IN VIEW OF ITS ADVANTAGES AND THE DIFFICULTY OF TRYING TO FIND AN ALTERNATIVE. SMITH PROMISED TO BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH US.

7. GRAHAM AND I BELIEVE THERE SHOULD BE SOME CONTACT WITH MUGABE TO REASSURE HIM THAT WE ARE STILL BENT ON AN ALL PARTIES MEETING IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND TO SEE THAT HE KEEPS THE WEEK FROM 19 AUGUST FREE. GRAHAM IS SUGGESTING TO LONDON THAT BILL DE PREE AND

BRITISH CHARGE DE CHASSIRON BE INSTRUCTED TO SEEK A MEETING WITH MUGABE FOR THIS PURPOSE. SUGGEST WE COORDINATE WITH THE BRITISH ON THIS.

8. COMMENT: IN SPITE OF THE CONFIDENCE SMITH EXPRESSED IN HIS SECURITY FORCES, HE WAS FRANKER THAN HE HAS BEEN IN THE PAST ABOUT THE DETERIORATING SITUATION HERE. HE MAY HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY THE DELEGATION OF FARMERS WHO LEFT HIM JUST AS WE WERE ARRIVING. THE GROUP HAS EXPRESSED TO US ITS DOUBTS ABOUT THE PLANTING SEASON WHICH SHOULD BEGIN IN A MONTH. WITHOUT NORMAL PLANTINGS, THE PRESENT ECONOMY COULD NOT SURVIVE. WE RECEIVED THE DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT THOUGH SMITH WILL KEEP HIS OPTIONS OPEN AND EVENTS OF THE NEXT WEEK WILL BE IMPORTANT, HE WILL PROBABLY TRY TO GO FOR AN ALL PARTIES MEETING AND TO TAKE HIS COLLEAGUES WITH
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 PRETOR 04542 081319Z

HIM. HOWEVER, HE WAS NOT WILLING TO DISCUSS OUR PAPER ON THE SUBJECTS SUGGESTED FOR DISCUSSION IN IT. HE GIVES EVERY EVIDENCE OF SUBSTANTIVE INFLEXIBILITY. WE HAVE COME TO LEARN THAT WHAT HE MEANS BY A "REASONABLE ARRANGEMENT" IS ONE HE CONSIDERS ACCEPTABLE TO HIS FOLLOWERS -- NOT THE WHITE POPULATION AS A WHOLE -- BUT THE LEADERS OF THE COTERIE AROUND HIM FROM THE RHODESIA FRONT WHO HAVE DELIVERED THE WHITE VOTE SO EFFECTIVELY: MEN LIKE P.K. VAN DER BYL, HILLARY SQUIRES, BOSS LILLFORD, ETC. HE CAN BRING THEM ALONG A LITTLE WAY BUT NOT VERY FAR.
EDMONDSON

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